

STUDENT SESSION: CHARACTER BIOGRAPHIES

"We are living in a world of make believe...If you have a personal biography for your character, that's one of the things that makes people interested in you when you show up on-screen, 'cause that character came from somewhere."

—Samuel L. Jackson

CHAPTER REVIEW

Sam demonstrates how character biographies are necessary when you're acting in a complex or high-stakes scene, or playing a character that is far away from yourself. In order to achieve a strong emotional impact in your performance, you have to understand what your character has been through. Sam emphasizes that you have the freedom to equip your character with whatever backstory you want, as long as it fits within the given circumstances in the script. For details that aren't available, use your imagination!

TAKE IT FURTHER

- Sam received an Academy Award nomination for his portrayal of Jules in *Pulp Fiction*. Watch the film and find the two instances where Sam delivers the Ezekiel 25:17 monologue. Compare how he delivers the speech in the apartment scene near the beginning of the film and in the diner scene at the end. Note the differences in tone, movement, and energy. How do Sam's choices convey Jules's growth as a character? Do you think his goal has changed for each one?

ASSIGNMENT

- It's time to create a character biography for your chosen character. Using the goals you mapped out in Chapter 2, start creating a narrative about your character's childhood, family, friends, career, hopes, dreams, and anything else you feel necessary to explain who they are in the present moment of the script. Continue to use the script for clues about what type of backstory your character deserves.

7. NOTES